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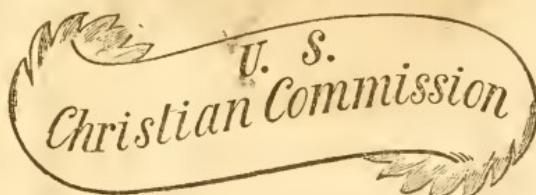




INFORMATION FOR ARMY MEETINGS.

In many places the fourth Sabbath evening of the month is devoted to a Union Monthly Concert of Prayer for the Army and Navy. The deepest interest has been excited by these meetings. It is humbly suggested to all who believe in the power of prayer, to form such meetings during the crisis of our nation's destiny. This tract is compiled with the view of affording information for these Army Meetings. Please circulate it.

JANUARY, 1865. .



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1870

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157

21 March 1862

INFORMATION

FOR

JANUARY MEETINGS.

Army of the Potomac.

An Officer's Appeal for the Gospel.

SINCE the memorable message of Cornelius the Centurian to the Apostle Peter, we have seen nothing of the kind so noteworthy, as the following letter from an officer of high position in the regular army, at the head-quarters of the army of the Potomac. Whether we consider the position of the writer, the force of the arguments, the fervor of its spirit, or the novelty of a soldier pleading with ministers of Christ to give the gospel to the army, we must be deeply impressed by it. It was read to the Executive Committee of the Christian Commission on the day that a proposal to supply over two hundred chapel-tents, at a cost of \$123,000, was under consideration. We need scarcely say that the decision to supply them,

if the church would raise the means, was unanimous. Mr. Morris K. Jessup's plan of asking each church to buy a tent, to be inscribed with its name, was simultaneously, and without consultation, proposed and acted on by the Presbyterian church of Tuscarora, Pa., and the *Thompson Tuscarora Tabernacle* is now on its way to Nashville. Thus the Lord has been preparing soldiers to ask for, and the churches to give, the means of grace. Let every church send on speedily its camp chapel-tent and every town an able preacher for six weeks to occupy it.

The Christian Commission and its Work.

It has never been my pleasure to have the opportunity of listening to the claims of the United States Christian Commission, as presented by any of its agents. Almost constant field service during the war, has precluded the possibility of my becoming acquainted with the feelings of Christians North towards the Commission. How do you estimate the importance of its operation? If the results of its work have been communicated, very great interest must have been excited therein.

I fear, however, that the sympathy of the churches in the workings of the Commission, is not proportionate to the interest they may feel in the result of its labors.

Hard to get Preachers.

I am led to infer this from the fact, as I have learned, that it is very difficult to secure, *not money*, but the services of the right kind of preachers, for the most limited period prescribed by the regulations of the Commission.

What is the reason of this? One might inquire if it be from lack of patriotism; but, whenever I have been

North, I have found my Christian friends there especially anxious that this war should be fought out to the most bitter end. In every prayer-meeting I heard most earnest prayers offered for the efficiency of our armies—for the spiritual, as well as the temporal good of the soldier; especially for the sick and wounded of their number. Is not this patriotic? Is it not very kind that the soldier should be thus remembered? Then, look at the donations that are made to the Christian and Sanitary Commissions. Are they not magnificent specimens of benevolence? It would seem so. All these are certainly most commendable; and were the like done in behalf of any other cause, it would be marvellously virtuous.

Praying is Neither Fighting nor Preaching.

But, in this case, suppose all should pray for the country, make donations, and hope that the war would be vigorously prosecuted—and *do nothing more*. If that would do the work, how gladly would our brave soldiers do all this over and over again, in lieu of the terrible hardships and exposures of their present life, nor think themselves either patriotic or benevolent!

In order to maintain that great and holy struggle, it is necessary that a certain aggregate number of citizens shall be in the field, denying themselves of all that is desirable in life while they live, and ready in any moment to sacrifice that for which a man will give all that he hath.

Your Business.

It would be very difficult to select those who, more than some others, *ought* to make this sacrifice. My country is equally your country, and your country

is equally my country. The object for which we are fighting is equally dear to each, and is common to all. Every citizen owes, if need be, his life to his country. If, to avert from all a general danger, certain particular citizens nobly volunteer their services and their lives on the battle-field, would you call it benevolence, when some of the rest, who are to share equally the reward won by the heroic few, donate a few dollars to relieve the hardships of their brave defenders? Do they not *owe* every thing they have, even to their very lives, to those who are fighting their battles, though under no more obligation to do so than their fellow-citizens, who practically have not sacrificed *one* accustomed luxury for their country's good? Are not all citizens, and especially Christian citizens, not in the army, under the deepest obligations, demanded alike by common gratitude and justice, to contribute all that may be expedient to promote the benefit of those noble men who soon may lie heavily and cold on the bloody field, *for them?*

Can't Spare our Pastor.

And yet there are some very patriotic churches which "don't feel able to spare our pastor, to preach to the soldiers in the army, for more than two weeks at most;" although mean while good supplies might be obtained to preach quite as usefully at home. The cushioned seats would remain quite as soft, and the temperature of the building would be just as nicely regulated, as if the pastor preached in his accustomed place.

No Prayer-Meeting for Three Years.

Not a week ago, I heard a Christian soldier state, in one of our camp prayer-meetings:—"I have been in the army three years, and this is the first privilege of this kind that I have enjoyed." All this time the brethren of his own church had not been deprived of a single service in consequence of the war. They had, indeed, prayed for their brethren in the army, but did not feel able to spare their pastor, to go and preach to their brethren in the army, though they were spiritually starving and dying in defence of the religious luxuries of those staying at home.

I am sure it is only necessary for the churches at home to get a correct view of the facts, to secure the most prompt and unreserved co-operation with the Commission in every particular.

An Eye-Witness.

Having held official positions in the field, both East and West, which allowed of very extensive observation, and having never in any way been connected with the Commission, my opinions concerning it are perfectly independent: they are presented on my own responsibility, in the hope that they may help the churches to form a just appreciation of their duties and the privileges in connection with the work under consideration.

An Open Door.

The advantages which the army offers during the winter as a field of Christian labor are unparalleled.

At vast expense, we send missionaries to preach the

gospel in China and India, where, before one idea can be communicated to the people, weary months must be spent in the study of the language. After this is partially acquired, through innumerable difficulties, the missionary succeeds in collecting perhaps an audience, here and there, of children, women, and men, of by no means the most intelligent class. The good work is one eminently of faith and patience. The city pastor has an audience alike composed of different classes and grades, of such variety, that on many subjects it is difficult to address more than a small per centage of the audience directly at the same time. Then there are many who are too young, and many others too old, to afford much probability of successful fruition of the seed, no matter how earnestly it may have been scattered.

All, whether young or old, and of every class, are more or less pre-occupied by the various occupations and excitements of city life, tending to preclude meditation on divine things.

A Selected Congregation.

If that pastor visit the army, as a delegate of the Christian Commission, he may go from one end of the line to the other, and throughout the entire army he will find but one style of audience; and that of the best possible class, in this—*it consists almost exclusively of young men.* They possess good average intelligence; are not pre-occupied; are not harassed by family cares; they are provided for; they have simply to obey orders when they come, and in the interim, have to endure so much wearisome monotony, that many who would not take the trouble to attend church when at home, would now gladly listen to any thing or any body.

Soldiers Think.

The soldier's life, though not favorable for reading, is very conducive to reflection. The drum beats, and he awakes, or gets his rations, or goes to bed, as the case may be, until it beats again. Without need for farther thought or care, he is (in winter-quarters) "as if he were a boy again." Their life is thus favorable both to attention and reflection. Of similar age, with common pursuits and dangers, they have common tastes and feelings. What is adapted to one, suits all.

No Half-Full Meetings.

The soldiers are willing to hear the truth. I have never attended a meeting held by the Christian Commission that was only half full. As a rule, they are overflowing, even where they are held every evening in the week.

No Stereotyped Meetings.

It seems impossible to have meetings conducted in the uniform style so common in the churches North. Always, after the first few meetings, a spirit of deep interest is awakened, taking on the character of what is termed a revival.

Home and Sabbath-School.

This, I think, is attributable to the fact that the majority of our soldiers have once been under the influence of Sabbath-schools or Christian homes, so that the buried seed has only to be a little watered, and it springs up with a freshness that is truly reviving to witness. It matters not how profane and irreverent they may have become, with the soldier as with the sailor, the memories

of home and the Sabbath-school are very sacred, and even though nothing that is said may in itself interest them, there is always one certain clue; let something be said which shall awaken their early associations, and their feelings are immediately enlisted. They will never "go back," as they term it, on their "bringing up."

Death Real.

At home, should they be addressed on the uncertainty of life, youth and growing strength form a never-failing shield on which these admonitions are received; but here, touch that point ever so delicately, and every word brings up visions of dead comrades and hair-breadth escapes, to supersede any argument on that question. Death is to them as much a reality as life is.

Wants Something to Love.

The condition of the soldier exhibits an advantage for the reception of truth, like to that which grows out of bereavement. So long has he been absent from those he loves, he begins to think of them with those who were dead long ago; and as at midnight hour, beneath the silent stars, he keeps his lonely watch, he comes, more than other men, to feel the want of something to love. In this yearning mood, the soul is very apt to feel after God. Many facts have I met with of soldiers coming off picket much wiser and much happier than when they went on.

Will Have a God or an Idol.

How, then, is it we have been accustomed to consider the life of the soldier so conducive to profligacy? Because it is so. When the tide of feeling, rising in the

soldier's breast, is not taken at the flood by kind counsel and Christian sympathy, it bursts in scattered foam and dissipation. When reflection but starts accusing voices, its spell must be broken by loud oaths, the troubled spirit must be soothed by drink. Therefore is it most urgent efforts should be made to surround the soldier with every possible religious influence, seeing he is so easily saved from so much.

Fearful Corruption.

In the absence of these privileges, the men are, week after week, and perhaps month after month, lying crowded in winter quarters, the intolerable *ennui* relieved only by a mutual exchange of all the filthy garbage that the vilest may have scraped from the filthiest kennels of human depravity.

The fearful corruption thus engendered, is truly appalling, rendering the atmosphere too often totally fatal to the last spark of youthful virtue.

The Only Help.

If the Christian Commission fail to do the work it contemplates, it will be left undone.

No Chapel Tents.

During the winter it is impossible to have religious services in the open air. Yet there is not a tent in the Government service, to my knowledge, provided for this purpose.

A Revival at Every Chapel.

I cannot conceive of any thing in which a benevolent Christian can make such a good investment for Christ as

in the presentation of a chapel-tent to the army. I have never seen one in use any where, but it became not only the occasion of deep awakening, but also inevitably a centre round which, in various camps adjoining, a work of grace would commence.

Besides one or two at each Corps Hospital, there should be one for every Brigade in the army.

There is no other source, except the Commission, through which reading of any kind, except daily news, will reach the soldier. In no other way but by an organization of this kind, recognized by the churches and by the Government, can chapels, Christian laborers, and religious reading, be provided in any measure; as under no other circumstances could the necessary transportation, passes, and mail facilities be obtained.

Scarcity of Chaplains.

Are there not Chaplains commissioned on purpose to do this work? Yes, but with some of the regiments only. In the Fifth Corps, which, I suppose, is as well supplied as any in the army, there are to-day thirty-seven regiments which have *no* chaplain. Then, as in every other corps, there is a brigade of artillery, there are independent batteries, division field hospitals, ambulance trains, wagon trains, and all the various head-quarters, none of which are allowed chaplains at any time. For all this work there are only six delegates and two chapel tents. Besides, supposing there was a superfluity of chaplains, what could they do comparatively without chapels, books, tracts, etc.? In the Second Corps there are to-day thirty-eight regiments without chaplains, besides all these, the separate commands in it detailed above.

With this corps there are now but three working delegates. All the regular troops that have been in the army of the Potomac, with the exception of one regiment, have been totally without chaplains, even to bury their dead, *and within a hundred miles of Washington have been less cared for than the recognized heathen.* There is a base hospital near City Point for many thousand patients. Shall that be supplied with chaplains by transferring them from the few regiments which have them?

So far as the magnitude of the operations of the Commission are concerned, it would seem that the presence or absence of a few chaplains, more or less, should scarcely be taken into account.

The delegate of the Christian Commission has many advantages. * * * * *

No Restrictions.

He is subject to no restrictions, except those made in the division of the labor by the Commission. If he is not well received in one place, he can walk a few steps farther on to another camp. A missionary in Pekin would meet with about as much limitation. He has no military orders to give, or to obey. He is understood to be working for the good of the soldier, not for pay; this is a free pass to the soldier's heart.

Neighborly.

He comes full of fresh enthusiasm, which is exceedingly refreshing and encouraging, especially to the sick soldier. It does him good to see the clean, smiling face of a civilian, and he likes to tell him of his many adventures, it seems so neighborly. Then comes the mutual

sympathy, followed by the gracious word, dropped into the open heart of the grateful soldier, who is made happier for the coming week by the friendly interview.

If the delegate happen to come from the same county as some of the men, they feel just like school-boys when visited by a relative from their distant home. The effect is more cheering than any grown-up people at home will understand.

We Want the Best.

The kind of delegates most needed are not good readers of sermons. The real, main work of the Commission must be done by steady, hard-working, faithful Christian men. The most desirable combination for a good delegate, would be a happy faculty of extemporaneous discourse, with cheerful conversational qualities. There are in the army a large number of officers and men of very high intelligence, who, prior to entering the service, were accustomed to the best pulpit talent in the country. For three or four years they have heard but a few occasional sermons, and would seem to receive new life, could they but hear once more the inspiring words of their old pastor.

Practise as Well as Preach.

Why cannot the *best men in the country* visit the army occasionally, and encourage the brave men in the performance of those duties they once urged them to undertake? Are they not deserving of it? Would our comfortable brethren at home be thus making a greater sacrifice for us, than we are making for them? It is very desirable that our Christian brethren, who are eager for young men to enter the army, should, as far as possible, share their burdens after they are in it, and thus in our

common cause manifest a common sympathy of Christian patriotism.

A Revived Minister and Church.

The church which sends its pastor to the army as a delegate, will not lose any thing.

The advantage is a mutual one. The change is often very beneficial to the health of the delegate. It opens to him a new world, enlarges his knowledge of men, of a thousand things which he failed before to comprehend, furnishes him with a new field for illustration, and quickens his zeal for the salvation of men.

Preaching to Men in their Grave Clothes.

He preaches over graves here, and he *feels* that men are mortal. He exhorts men daily to come here to die, and they sit before him in their grave-clothes.

Real Prayer-Meetings.

The prayer-meetings in the army are not tame, formal, weakly meetings; they are as real as life and death, for sincerity and earnestness. I can compare them only to the old Fulton street daily prayer-meetings during the great revival, and they must contribute to the benefit of the pastor as well as of the soldier.

The Holy Spirit seems to be secretly working in anticipation of the co-operation of God's servants. Both at City Point and nearer the front, sinners are coming to Christ, not like tray sheep, but as doves flocking to their windows.

Unprecedented Eagerness for Truth.

During the ensuing winter, the field will be fully available; it seems ripe for the harvest, and waiting only

for the church to thrust in the sickle. From what I have seen, I think there is a universal eagerness for religious truth in the army which is beyond all precedent. This is a work which demands no mean offering. It deserves not only the money of the church, but a liberal contribution of its best talent and of its most faithful pastors, as the demands of the Commission may require.

B. H., U. S. A.

Head-quarters Army Potomac, Nov. 21, 1864.

The Gulf Department.

PORT HUDSON, LA., }
Nov. 23, 1864. }

DR. SMITH.—*Dear Sir:* I received from you, last Saturday, two barrels, two packages, and a cask of Christian Commission stores.

Glad, indeed, to get them, especially the clothing, which is just the thing needed here during this cold weather. I have but very little left of any kind. Socks are needed most. Please send more, as soon as you can. Forward to us all the socks you can spare. I am entirely out of diarrhoea medicine: please send us some of the blackberry cordial as soon as you can.

The cask of pickles I delivered to Dr. Davids, the post surgeon, just as I received them. He was very glad to get them; said they were next to potatoes for the scurvy, of which disease he had a number of cases. He said he should prescribe such a number of them to a patient daily as medicine. The books and papers you sent

me, are all needed here, and can be profitably distributed.

It is getting very cold in my room this weather. I have established weekly prayer-meetings here: we have one to-night. I am trying to do good by the blessing of God, and feel his presence with me. Help us by your prayers.

Please remember me to brothers Brown, Diosse and Horton, and tell them I wish to be remembered in their prayers.

Please send me some more of the U. S. Primers. I am all out, and they are daily calling for them; also, some Hymn-books for the Army and Navy. I have plenty of the Song Books.

From your most obedient servt,

TRUE WHITTIER.

The Commission in Maine.

In March, 1864, the two counties of Sagadahoc and Lincoln were assigned by the U. S. Christian Commission to the Bath Army Committee, for them to canvass in behalf of that Commission. This Committee's field of labor having been enlarged, now embracing five counties, namely, Sagadahoc, Androscoggin, Kennebec, Lincoln, and Knox, they wish to present to the public the following statement of money and stores received and forwarded by them from May 1st to November 1st:—

Bath, cash,.....	\$1,638 06
“ 12 boxes stores.	
Wiscasset, cash.....	114 55

Richmond, cash.....	185	80
Dresden, "	31	15
" 2 boxes stores.		
Boothbay, cash.....	486	52
Southport, "	200	00
Winneganee, cash	106	00
" 1 box stores.		
Phipsburg, cash.....	175	88
" 1 box stores.		
Bowdoinham, cash.....	455	00
" 4 boxes stores.		
Bowdoin, cash	92	75
" 2 boxes stores.		
West Bath, cash	146	46
Woolwich, "	236	00
" 4 boxes stores.		
Durham Union Church, cash.....	5	00
" " " 1 box stores.		
Lewiston Factory, cash	18	35
Durham Congregational Church, cash	15	00
Sundry collections and friends, cash.....	31	76
<hr/>		
Total, cash.....	\$3,939 00	
27 boxes stores, valued at.....	1,350 00	
<hr/>		
Whole amount,.....	\$5,289 00	

The work of the Christian Commission has been constantly increasing on the hands of the Executive Committee, so that, in their words, "It is estimated that we shall need at least a million dollars to carry us through the winter with our present large operations." The work in Maine has been thoroughly organized, and it is hoped

that the middle district, embracing the above-named counties, will not be backward in doing its part in the glorious work of providing comforts for the noble men who are fighting our battles for us.

Money and stores may be sent to either Charles Douglass or G. H. Palmer, Bath, and will be immediately forwarded to the army.

CHARLES DOUGLASS,
A. F. BEARD,
GERSHOM H. PALMER.

Army Com. for the Middle Dist. of Maine.

The Shenandoah Valley.

Stations and Delegates U. S. C. C.

It is now two and a half months since I entered on my duties in this department, and they have been months of constant activity, and I believe, too, of important results for good. There was but one station in the Valley at that time—at Sandy Hook—and but three delegates—Revs. Woods, Curtis, and Brackett. At present we have stations at the following places: Sandy Hook, Harper's Ferry, Winchester, Martinsburg, Cumberland, one near Gen. Sheridan's headquarters, and one at Stephenson's Station, the present terminus of the Winchester Railroad. Several other stations will be established as soon as the army becomes more settled. Delegates have also been sent to Frederick, and one is about to go to Hagerstown, to assist Rev. J. Evans in the work at that point. During these two and a half months we have had seventy-five

delegates in the field, of whom about twenty-five are at present engaged. These have been noble men—Christian ministers and laymen—who came with a desire to benefit the bodies and souls of our soldiers. They have been men of piety and good works, who could prepare food for the hungry, wash, dress, and nurse the wounded, and who could at the same time pray with a dying man, and point him to the Great Physician.

Angels' Visits.

The two points of greatest need during the campaign have been Winchester and Martinsburg: the former as the centre of our great hospitals, and the latter chiefly as the feeding station where the men stopped on their way to other hospitals, and where our delegates have labored night after night in feeding, washing and dressing, and in assisting the men into the cars. It deserves to be recorded of the loyal ladies of Winchester and Martinsburg that in this campaign they have proved their devotion to their country's cause by doing every thing in their power to alleviate the sufferings of those who have fallen in the country's battles. Early and late we have found them in the hospitals, hastening noiselessly from cot to cot, bearing the luxuries and delicacies of their own tables to nourish the weary sufferers, and with smiles and cheerful welcomes reviving many a drooping heart—women whose sole design is to aid them in caring for their men. Everything is working smoothly, successfully, and harmoniously, and the blessing of God is accompanying and following our labors.

Praying that the richest blessings of Heaven may still rest upon you, and upon all your co-laborers, and begging

myself an interest in your prayers, and the prayers of all our friends, I remain,

Most truly yours,

J. R. MILLER.

The Ladies of the Christian Commission.

Interesting Items.

At the Convention of Western Branches, of which a report appears on another page, Mrs. Wittenmyer was listened to with great interest while she detailed to some extent the *kitchen* work of the Commission. This auxiliary was adopted last January, and originated with Mrs. Wittenmyer, and since that time she has been laboring in that behalf. Army surgeons recognize it to be a fact that the cooking of hospitals is very deficient, and also that good diet is very essential to the comfort and recovery of the sick and wounded. At one time there were twenty-four of these kitchens in successful operation. They are more generally used in the army of the Cumberland than elsewhere, where they have been very efficient. The kitchens are supplemental to the hospitals, subordinate to the military authorities.

In the operations of the kitchen, there is, first, a general table for all those who are able to walk, who get full rations; and, secondly, a special diet kitchen for the very sick, where the fare is good enough for Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet. Soups, meats, delicacies, and every thing palatable for sick men, are gotten up in this department. The demand for potatoes and all kinds of vegetables is very great. These kitchens have an independent store-room, and the lady in charge carries the key, so that there is little fear of a misapplication of any supplies. These kitchens,

in addition to the good done by them to the physical wants of the soldiers, secure the presence of good, practical Christian women, which results in great good to the spiritual wants of the soldiers. The ladies write their letters, talk and sing to them, read the Bible, and minister in a thousand ways that women only know. Mrs. Wittenmyer has lately visited the army of the Cumberland, and made arrangements for extending these Commission kitchens in that military department. To give some idea of the work, she referred to the Cumberland hospital, at Nashville, where the kitchen is in charge of Miss Morehead. There were there at one time over eight hundred on special diet, for whom over twenty different dishes had to be prepared daily, and sometimes the number ran over eleven hundred. There are three thousand five hundred patients in the hospital most of the time, and one day, after all the other work, the ladies issued over five hundred arm-slings to poor mutilated soldiers after one of the battles. In addition to the work germane to the diet kitchen, it was often found necessary to work all night in preparing straps and bandages, which the women at home could do just as well, if they were only aroused to the necessity of their laboring. She hoped American women would renew their efforts for soldiers, and relieve their sisters in the field of such work as could be done in the rear. Contributions are needed of canned and dried fruits, all kinds of vegetables, and other articles useful in that department.

Legacions.

Mr. Chamberlain, of Cincinnati, exhibited two notes, one a five dollar greenback, received from a dying soldier, accompanied with the simple words: "This is all I have to leave on earth. I want to give it to the best friend I have ever had—the Christian Commission." The other a two dollar note given by an old lady, with the remark that "This was all John had when he died; and, as the Christian Commission was instrumental in bringing him to Christ, I know he would want me to give it to that Commission, if he were alive."

Texas.

Mr. B. F. Jacobs, of Chicago, stated, at the Convention of Western Christian Commission Branches, in Indianapolis, last month, that in one brigade, in Texas, five hundred and fifty-seven men had joined the army church in five weeks.

A Messenger of the Churches.

The heralds of salvation and messengers of mercy are painted with wings, to show their power of rapid movement. Many of the delegates of the Christian Commission seem to be in training for angelic honors. Rev. M. Hitchcock's report is a specimen of the labors of these messengers of mercy.

Ten Days Neglected.

I reached Fredericksburg, in company with others, Thursday evening, May 19. We walked from Belle Plain,

carrying our luggage. Friday morning was assigned to duty in the 6th corps, 2d division, 2d ward, hospital E. Found here fifteen men. Occupied myself with two men of the worst,—one from Vermont and one from Massachusetts; had been wounded ten days, and not even the blood washed off their hands and faces since. Washed them, cut their hair and beard. Got some gruel from our rooms; and at noon all were removed, except the one for whom I had done the most; he had died. I felt that to be able to make him comfortable the last three hours of his life was a real privilege.

The Mill.

P. M.—Went to an old mill, just being filled up. It was two miles up the river, opposite Falmouth; contained about two hundred and sixty-five men. With others, I labored as hard as I could,—conscious, all the time, that men were suffering,—until Monday night. When this hospital was evacuated, I was one of the first at Fredericksburg. I did not get water to wash a single one's face, or time to write a letter, until Sabbath afternoon. I had two services that day, however.

Stimulus to Labor

Tuesday, A. M.—I repaired to the railroad station, where lay six hundred poor fellows on the ground, where they had been since midnight. Here I remained until Thursday noon, with scarcely any sleep or rest, coming to Washington, with the last load of wounded, in charge of the Christian Commission tent and remaining stores, where we arrived Friday noon. I think I never did more physical labor,—preaching the gospel and minister-

ing to the comfort of suffering men,—in any previous four weeks of my life.

Fright of Wounded.

Monday, May 30, P. M.—The company, with twenty-six delegates, went on board a chartered steamer, drawn by a tug, with stores for White House. I was put in charge of all. Reached White House, after a pleasant passage, Wednesday afternoon. That night and the remainder of the week, taking care of men brought from the battle-field, and putting up tents. Saturday afternoon, was directed, by the medical director, with eleven others, to proceed to Washington, on board a steamer then leaving, with wounded men. I had the care of this company and four hundred and fifty wounded. There had been no suitable superintendence in having the steamer ready, with supplies, and the captain was most unsympathizing with regard to the wants of the poor suffering men. We delegates thought we had a hard time of it, being quite worn out when we arrived at Alexandria, Monday afternoon.

Tuesday, on board the mail steamer, I returned to White House, in charge of a company of delegates. From Wednesday afternoon until Saturday, had the superintendence of a cavalry corps. Saturday, went to Cold Harbor, walking a good share of the distance in the hot sun, which proved too much for me. The next day the army moved, starting for James River. The 18th corps went to the White House, where I was left, Monday morning, to go around with the supplies. But, being no better on Thursday, it was thought best I should go at once to Washington, *via* steamer to Baltimore. After

two days' rest, I was enough better to attend to duty. Two days I spent with a Massachusetts officer, Captain Alley, and was then put into the store-room 500 H Street, where I remained until the evening of July 5th, a period of fifteen days.

Keeps one of his Church Members in his Place.

Both at Fredericksburg and White House, and on the "Utica," my work was such as it was difficult to keep an account of. It was genuine hard work all of the time, and it wore upon me gradually until the time I was taken sick. But it was most delightful service. A member of my church is now at City Point, and I hope to keep one there until I can go again, or there be no more occasion for delegates.

Most truly yours,

M. H. HITCHCOCK.

U. S. Christian Commission.

Convention of the Western Branches.

Upon the call of the Secretary of the Home Organization, representatives of the various Western Branches of the U. S. Christian Commission met in Convention, in the city of Indianapolis, (in Wesley Chapel,) on Tuesday, November 29th, and continued in session three days.

Members were present as follows:

Central Office, Philadelphia.—Rev. W. E. Boardman, Corresponding Secretary; Rev. Lemuel Moss, Home Secretary.

Wheeling.—Rev. S. B. Barnitz.

Cincinnati.—Judge Bellamy Storer, A. E. Chamberlain, Rev. B. W. Chidlaw.

Cleveland.—Joseph Perkins, George Mygatt.

Milwaukee.—W. S. Carter, J. A. Dutcher.

Peoria.—Rev. W. E. M'Laren, George H. M'Ilvaine.

St. Louis.—Rev. S. Wells, J. H. Parsons, Isaac S. Smyth.

Chicago.—B. F. Jacobs, Rev. J. M. Strong.

Indianapolis.—Dr. Clippinger, James M. Ray, Rev. F. C. Holliday, J. T. Dunn, J. C. Hereth, C. N. Todd.

Louisville.—Isaac Russell.

Nashville.—Rev. J. C. Thomas.

Memphis.—K. A. Burnell.

Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer, being present, was invited to sit as a delegate.

The officers of the Convention were:

For President.—Hon. Bellamy Storer, of Cincinnati.

For Vice President.—Isaac S. Smyth, of St. Louis, Joseph Perkins, of Cleveland.

For Secretary.—G. H. M'Ilvaine.

The Principal Committees were:

Committee on Enrolment.—C. N. Todd, George H. M'Ilvaine, J. A. Dutcher.

Committee on Permanent Organization.—Isaac Russell, W. E. M'Laren, B. F. Jacobs.

Committee on Business.—A. E. Chamberlain, J. H. Parsons, Chaplain J. C. Thomas, W. S. Carter, Joseph Perkins.

The three days were fully occupied in discussions upon the whole work of the Commission, at home and in the field. Rarely has such a gathering been more strongly characterized by earnest attention to business and by a

spirit of Christian devotion and harmony. All felt that God had committed to them, as his stewards, the most important trusts, and that they were animated by common desires and aims. Interesting reports were made from the various home districts. Chaplain Thomas warmed all hearts by the details of his system of libraries for hospitals, &c. Mrs. Wittenmyer gave a full outline of the diet-kitchen work. Public meetings were held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, which were largely attended.

We cannot give even a brief synopsis of the entire proceedings. Some of the more important points and resolutions are presented:

Mr. Chamberlain offered the following resolution, which had received the sanction of the Philadelphia office, which was adopted :

Resolved, That the experience of the U. S. Christian Commission has shown that its work can be most properly carried on by a conjunction of the distribution of religious reading matter and stores, and the personal ministrations of delegates; and that stores for the purpose should be under the immediate control and command of the Commission, and to this end we commend to the several Branches the collection of stores, with which to aid in supplying delegates for their work.

By the same gentleman, from the Business Committee, which was also adopted :

Resolved, That in the work of the United States Christian Commission, there is committed to our care a most sacred trust; and that it is our duty, as members of this Commission, to use every means to insure the direct application of all stores and funds so generously contributed, to the appropriate work of our commission, viz.: the care of the army and navy of the United States.

2d. That we individually, and as a commission, most cordially bid God speed to every organization at work for the good of our soldiers, refugees and freedmen.

The Convention endorsed the voluntary and economical conduct of the work, in the following:

Resolved, That in the work of organization and collections at home, for the supply of army work of the Christian Commission, the voluntary principle of an unpaid Agency should be strictly and sacredly adhered to; but that a permanent paid Agency may be and ought to be employed so far, and only so far as is necessary to direct, systematize, and render thorough, the unpaid services of returned delegates and others.

On the subject of thoroughly canvassing the country, and organizing in every community, the Business Committee reported the following, which were adopted:

That, in addition to the branch organizations, there should be formed in every locality, where it may be done to advantage, army committees to carry forward the work as auxilliaries to the Branch of the district embracing that locality.

That effort should be made every where to interest the ladies in this work, and to induce them, if not already associated together in some other soldiers' aid organization, to form Ladies' Christian Commissions, into which all the ladies should be gathered, and with them all the men, and the children, if possible, as members, that every individual, old and young, male and female, may have membership in the Commission and part in the work.

That, in this great work, the press should be fully employed in newspaper articles, and by circulars and pamphlets.

Respecting railroad, and other facilities, it was unanimously

Resolved, That our different Branches be instructed to exercise the severest fidelity, scrutiny and care, in regard to the railroad, express, steamboat and telegraph facilities so generously accorded to us.

Reference is made, elsewhere, to the subject of diet-kitchens.

The great question of chapels for the army was fully discussed, many facts of interest brought out, and the following resolution passed :

Resolved, That this Convention approve the building of field chapels and chapel roofs, and that the public be earnestly appealed to, to furnish all the means to build them.

Chaplain Thomas was accorded twenty minutes to explain the system of Christian Commission libraries in the army of the Cumberland. There are twenty libraries in the hospitals at Nashville, Chattanooga and Murfreesboro. Forty more are ordered, and will soon be there, supplying every permanent hospital in the country of which Nashville is the base. In the fifteen military departments of the army, there are about one hundred and fifty hospital Chaplains, and sixty-nine thousand three hundred men. An estimate of one hundred and twenty-five volumes to a library, with two men to one volume, would require four libraries to every thousand men. For the seventy thousand men it would require two hundred and eighty libraries. Sixty of these are already had, and twenty more can be made up from volumes already on hand. A great want of literature is felt in the army, wholesome, broad, stirring, deep secular reading, as well as of earnest religious books. The system of Commission libraries works well. From his experience, he knew that there were those in the army who needed sterling, standard reading. The point is to cater to every taste. The nearer you can bring home to the army, the more useful you are. Let the soldiers have the reading which will develop and enlighten, and such as they have been used to at home. The libraries are all suitable for 18mo, 16mo,

12mo, and 8vo volumes. A sample of these libraries was in the room.

The libraries are given to persons who, first, are capable, and, second, religious, who give receipts that the volumes shall be skilfully used and cared for. Registers are kept, and by whom the books are drawn, in what ward and bed, and by this means the volumes are kept and traced beyond a peradventure. The libraries cost fifty dollars, on an average, for one hundred and twenty-five volumes. The cases will admit of one hundred and eighty, but the average number is one hundred and twenty-five. Monthly reports are made of the number of times the book has been drawn, and any incident connected with the reading of the book is carefully noted, so that a history of each book is preserved. What a valuable and Christian record will this form when the necessity for them is passed away! These libraries are a part of the history of the war. The Chaplain detailed some of the experiences of the libraries, in the army of the Cumberland, for the year and a half in which he had been engaged in this work. He was listened to with deep attention, and certainly, we may add, that if there be any one branch of the work of the Christian Commission which should be sustained by the people at home, this matter of libraries addresses itself with peculiar and religious force.

Mrs. Wittenmeyer added her testimony in her hospital work to the importance and Christian usefulness of Chaplain Thomas and his system of libraries. Many hundreds of soldiers had she heard give "three cheers for Chaplain Thomas," or "God bless Chaplain Thomas." The effect of these libraries in breaking up card-playing, and

the frivolous amusements in the army, cannot be computed.

Upon this subject, the Business Committee reported the following resolutions, which were immediately adopted:

Resolved, That we cordially endorse the action of the Executive Committees in adopting the Magazine enterprise commenced in the Department of the Cumberland, and sincerely hope it may be vigorously carried out by all the field agents.

Resolved, That we heartily approve the introduction of the Loan Library system into the Department of the Cumberland, and urgently request its immediate extension throughout all the Military Departments.

Resolved, That we gratefully acknowledge the generous services of the publishers in supplying their publications at half price; those of Adams' Express Company in transporting them free; and particularly those of Gould & Lincoln, of Boston, Poe & Hitchcock, of Cincinnati, Scribner & Co., of New York, and Ashmead & Evans, of Philadelphia, in shipping the publications thus procured without pay.

It was a thrilling episode, when, in the midst of a discussion, Judge Storer read a dispatch from Nashville, stating that the enemy had been repulsed at Franklin, Tennessee, with the loss of six thousand men. This was acknowledged by the Convention singing:

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,”

and the offering of a fervent prayer for the brave and bleeding soldiers of the Republic, by Rev. Lemuel Moss. Rev. Shepherd Wells gave the Convention a sketch of the country in which the battle occurred, having had his home for eighteen years in the neighborhood.

The following stirring letter from General Fisk, received during the session, may properly close our report of the Convention. All who know him, know his hearty participation in our work.

HEAD-QUARTERS DISTRICT NORTH MISSOURI,
Macon, Mo., November 26, 1864.

*Rev. Lemuel Moss, Secretary U. S. Christian Commission,
Indianapolis, Ind.*

MY DEAR BROTHER: I am quite disappointed that my public duties imperatively demand my presence with my command, and therefore forbid me the pleasure I had anticipated in meeting yourself and others of our blessed Commission at Indianapolis, on the 29th instant. I am glad that you set this movement on foot, and that all the Western Committees will be well and earnestly represented. May God be with you, and direct your counsels in wisdom. The fields of our harvest are widening and whitening daily. Let our power for good be felt in every camp and fortress, in siege, fight, and hospital, on shore and sea. Rush on the work. The Christian public are with us. Did the people of God ever before have such an opportunity. May they wisely improve it in casting their abundance into the treasury of the Lord.

Yours, faithfully,
for Liberty and Union,

CLINTON B. FISK,
Brigadier General U. S.

Obituary.

Gov. Fairbanks.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the U. S. Christian Commission, held at the Central Office, No. 11 Bank street, Philadelphia, December 2d, 1864, the following minute, relative to the death of the late Gov. Fairbanks, was adopted and ordered to be published:

The Executive Committee have learned with deep regret of the death of the late Governor, Erastus Fairbanks, LL. D., member of the Commission for Vermont, which occurred at St. Johnsbury, on the 20th ult. He is the first member who has been called away by death. He was a successful business man, and, as a manufacturer, his name had become familiar even in foreign countries. His fellow citizens evinced their confidence in his capability and worth by repeatedly electing him their chief magistrate. During his last year of service in this position, his devoted love of country was exhibited in his efforts to prepare his gallant state for the heroic part she has performed in the present struggle for our nation's life. The manner in which he wielded the influence derived from his great wealth, ability, and high social position, is shown in the character of the community which has grown up around him, which has few rivals even in New England, for the comfort, thrift, intelligence and sobriety, which universally prevail. No intemperate person was employed in the extensive works over which he presided. He was a zealous friend of education, as well as of temperance, and was long a member of the corporation of the University of Vermont. All the great enterprises of the Church to bless and save men, such as the Bible, Tract, Sunday-school, Missionary and Sabbath Observance movements, found in him an enlightened advocate and liberal supporter. In short, he was a man whose death is an unspeakable loss alike to his family and friends, the Church, the nation and the world.

INFORMATION & INSTRUCTION ABOUT SUPPLIES.

ALL good and suitable stores are welcomed, and all necessary freight and charges paid on them by the Commission, and are distributed by delegates of the Christian Commission personally.

WHAT TO SEND.—MONEY, by all means, if possible. We need funds to pay the expenses of our delegates and laborers in the field; for the purchase of books, tracts, papers, and for the purchase of delicacies and comforts *not* sent by your loving hearts, which are very necessary for distribution in the hospitals.

The Special Diet Kitchens connected with the largest hospitals, now in successful operation, where delicacies and wholesome dishes are prepared for the sick soldier with the same care and skill as at home by the ladies employed in the Diet Kitchens by the Christian Commission, involve a large increase of labor and outlay of stores and funds. We appeal to the friends of the soldier at home, to meet this great, but necessary expense.

Cotton Shirts, Cotton Drawers, Canton Flannel Shirts and Drawers, Surgical Shirts and Drawers, (with tape strings to tie, instead of seams at the sides,) Large Cotton Drawers (to wear in-doors as pants,) Dressing-gowns, Slippers, (if of cloth or carpet, with thick soles,) Sheets, Pillow-cases, Bedticks (single, for filling with straw,) Pillows, Pads for fractured limbs, Ring-pads for wounds, Fans, Netting to protect from flies, Housewives, stored with needles, thread, buttons, pins, &c., Handkerchiefs, Wash-rags, Old Linen.

Oat-meal, Farina, Corn-starch, Dried Rusk, Jellies, Soda Biscuit, Butter Crackers, Boston Crackers, Pickles, Jams, Onions in Barrels, Apples in barrels, Cranberries, Dried Fruits. Eggs are always needed. They should be carefully packed in boxes large enough to hold about 100 dozen, made with handles projecting from each end, made strong and packed FULL, well shaken down as they are packed, and sent by express. Good Black Tea, Chocolate, Lemons, Syrups. All preparations of the blackberry are of double value.

Good Brandy, Madeira Wine, Port wine, Cordials. Domestic wines are excellent in winter, apt to spoil in summer.

STATIONERY IS MUCH NEEDED, paper, envelopes and pencils. Send the best Books, Magazines, Periodicals, Pictorials, and late newspapers.

HOW TO PACK.—Pack in boxes. Barrels are not as good. Secure well. Boxes should not be so large that two cannot conveniently lift them into a wagon. Pack eatables by themselves. Never pack perishable articles, such as oranges, lemons, bread, cakes, nor jars of jellies and jams, with other goods. Bottles and Jars should, when possible, be packed in boxes by themselves, well filled with saw-dust or straw. Never pack Clothing, or Dried Fruits and Berries, with goods that are liable to break and spill. Tin cans should be soldered; all other modes fail. Stone jars should be corked and firmly bound with oiled linen or leather over the cork, and packed closely in saw-dust or hay, in boxes, never exceeding a dozen and a half in a box, and nailed strongly, to bear rough handling. Jellies in tumblers, covered with paper, and wines, cordials, &c., in bottles, with paper or other poor stoppers, are liable to spill out, and if packed with other things, sure to injure them.

HOW TO MARK.—Mark in plain letters and figures, with paint or ink on the boards—cards rub off. On one corner, the number of the box according to the number sent by you in all, numbering your first box *1, your second *2, your third *3, and so on from the first sent to the last. On another corner, mark each box, as from your Society, giving the name, and HAVE IT CONSPICUOUSLY ADDRESSED TO THE MOST CONVENIENT BRANCH OF THE U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION, AS DIRECTED ON THE NEXT PAGE.

To secure acknowledgments, and to save trouble, also send an invoice or list by mail, on paper, the common letter sheet size, written only on one side, specifying each box or barrel by number, and giving the contents of each by itself. Give your own name and post-office in full, with the name of your State. Place also another list or invoice of the same kind in the box, under the lid.

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